

ACTION AID-00

INFO LOG-00 NP-00 CIAE-00 INL-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 WHA-00
 PERC-00 SRPP-00 DS-00 EAP-00 EB-00 EUR-00 FAAE-00
 FBIE-00 VC-00 H-00 TEDE-00 INR-00 VCE-00 AC-00
 DCP-01 NSAE-00 ACE-00 IRM-00 EPAE-00 DSCC-00 PRM-00
 DRL-00 NFAT-00 SAS-00 /001W

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RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D)

R 041820Z DEC 03
 FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4067
 INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
 AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
 AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
 AMEMBASSY LISBON
 AMEMBASSY MADRID
 AMEMBASSY MEXICO
 AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
 NSC WASHDC
 USCINCSO MIAMI FL
 USINT HAVANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 004177

NSC FOR LBARTON
 USCINCSO ALSO FOR POLAD
 USAID DCHA/OTI FOR RPORTER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/04/2013

TAGS: PGOV, PINR, PREL, VE

SUBJECT: PDAS DESHAZO VISITS [REDACTED]

B1

Classified By: Abelardo A. Arias, political counselor, for reasons 1.4
 (B) and (D)

 Summary

1. (C) [REDACTED] told WHA/DAS Peter DeShazo and the Ambassador December 3 that signature drives calling for recall referendums on President Hugo Chavez and 70 National Assembly deputies were an important step for Venezuelans to "overcome our difficulties." At a meeting [REDACTED] [REDACTED] stated the GOV would abide by the National Electoral Council's verification of contested signatures. DeShazo reiterated the U.S. commitment to a democratic, peaceful, electoral, and constitutional solution to defuse Venezuelan political tension and emphasized common goals.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: ALAN H FLANIGAN
 CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.4(B), 1.4(D)
 DECLASSIFY AFTER: 3 DEC 2023
 DATE/CASE ID: 13 JUN 2007 200504156

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[redacted] improving relations and [redacted]
governments continue abstaining from "microphone diplomacy."
He lambasted the international press for linking the GOV to
terrorist groups without credible proof [redacted]

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[redacted] End Summary.

Signature Drives

2. (C) WHA/DAS Peter DeShazo and the Ambassador met [redacted]

[redacted]
DeShazo [redacted] for the successful conclusion
of the November 21-24 and November 28-December 1 signature
drives calling for recall referendums on President Hugo
Chavez and 70 National Assembly deputies. DeShazo said the
drives reflected Venezuela's cultural roots in democracy and
openness. The Ambassador added that the drives facilitated
understanding between pro-GOV and opposition collection site
observers, who had to work together to make both drives
possible. [redacted] the drives will help
Venezuelans to "overcome our difficulties," but only because
the opposition realized it had to use legal, constitutional
means to manifest its political will. [redacted]
Venezuela paid a "high price" before the opposition "finally
came to the constitution," referring to the events of April
11, 2002 and a two-month opposition-led national strike.

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3. (C) [redacted] the opposition for celebrating
the end of its signature drive December 1 in Plaza Francia
because of the location's association with dissident military
officers. [redacted] the opposition's Democratic
Coordinating Committee should instead be symbolically
distancing itself from "coup-mongering" elements. [redacted]
did not speculate on controversial signature totals, saying
only that the true figures would be revealed by the National
Electoral Council (CNE) [redacted]
them. The Ambassador noted that the CNE had maximum of 30
days to verify the signatures. DeShazo [redacted]
that the U.S. supports a democratic, peaceful, electoral, and
constitutional solution for Venezuela's political impasse, in
accordance with OAS Resolution 833.

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Improved Relations, Less Microphone Diplomacy

4. (C) DeShazo emphasized common bilateral goals, including
energy policy and anti-narcotics efforts [redacted]

[redacted] assured

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DeShazo that Venezuela was increasing oil production and improving economic conditions. [REDACTED] satisfaction that bilateral relations were improving because both governments had abstained from public "microphone diplomacy" for the last six weeks. "We are playing by the rules of the game," [REDACTED] Chavez had mentioned the improvement publicly. [REDACTED] predicted relations would continue to improve so long as bilateral relations stay away from the microphones and the U.S. shows respect for the GOV. [REDACTED]

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5. (C) [REDACTED] the international press, particularly Colombia's El Tiempo, for unfairly linking the GOV to terrorist groups without credible proof. "If the FARC commits a crime and escapes into Venezuela, it is easy to say the GOV is helping them." [REDACTED] the reports reflect only the views of media owners, not the Colombian government or people. [REDACTED]

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Comment

7. (C) [] was enthusiastic about improving bilateral relations and cooperation, including proposing a [] meeting. [] to use specific issues [] as a springboard for general attacks on prior governments and free market economic policies seemed evasive at times, but he was conciliatory, constructive, and generally receptive to our points. [] the CNE should have the final word on the signature count was reassuring.
Shapiro

B1

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